Early College Enrollment Program (ECEP)
Guidelines
EARLY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Early College Enrollment Program (ECEP) is to provide an opportunity for qualifying high school students to earn the Alabama High School Diploma with an Advanced Career and Technical Education Endorsement and college credits toward an approved career technical or health certificate or degree that meets local, regional, or state high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand critical workforce training needs.

I. APPLICABLE PROGRAMS
   a. Postsecondary programs applicable to ECEP are health and those designated as high-demand, high-wage career technical by the Department of Postsecondary Education (DPE).
      b. Secondary programs eligible for ECEP are those designated as career and technical education by the Alabama State Department of Education (SDE).

II. INTENDED BENEFITS
   a. Promote articulation between secondary and postsecondary education for career and technical education courses, eliminating duplication of coursework.
   b. Allow students to earn postsecondary credits (career and technical education and academic credits toward a technical degree program or approved health certificate or degree program) before high school graduation at no cost to the student.
   c. Provide an opportunity for high school students to participate in approved postsecondary degree and/or certificate options (approved health programs leading to a certificate with licensure opportunities or an Associate in Occupational Technologies Degree, an Associate in Applied Technology Degree, or an Associate in Applied Science Degree or approved career technical certificates) (Attachment A) and to earn the Alabama High School diploma with an Advanced Career and Technical Education endorsement concurrently.
   d. Provide an opportunity for high school students to participate in postsecondary option that accommodates students wishing to transfer credit to baccalaureate degree programs in career technical and health science areas (e.g., Alabama Community College System Associate Degree Nursing [ADN] programs).
   e. Motivate students by preparing them to enter high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand employment earlier in their career.
   f. Encourage high-achieving students to enroll in career and technical education programs.
   g. Increase the percentage of high school seniors entering postsecondary education.
   h. Create structure for delivering high-cost programs at greater efficiency in small/rural school systems.
   i. Create increased opportunities for Alabama high school students to receive the Advanced Career and Technical Education diploma endorsements.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES
   a. ECEP participants earn dual enrollment credits applicable toward high school graduation and college degree requirements at no cost to the student provided the student maintains enrollment in at least nine credit hours of technical education courses each semester.
   b. ECEP students shall be enrolled as a full-time postsecondary student in a career and technical education program.
   c. Participation in the ECEP does not negate a student's eligibility to participate in high school extracurricular activities.
d. Alabama public community and/or technical colleges shall provide the ECEP option for secondary students.

e. Participation in the ECEP is at the discretion of the local education agency (LEA).

f. ECEP enrollment is limited to programs of study that are not available within the system at the local high school or career tech center or for students who are classified as secondary program concentrators (must have completed two courses within a pathway). Exceptions must be approved by both the DPE and the SDE Career and Technical Education Director. Students are encouraged to participate in articulation opportunities offered within the LEA prior to participating in the ECEP.

g. Students are not restricted to attending the two-year college(s) of which the service area(s) includes their high school.

h. ECEP courses may be delivered through distance learning and other non-traditional delivery methods.

i. The maximum length of the ECEP is two (2) years including summers. The program may require an extended school day for apprenticeship or clinical experiences.

j. ECEP students may remain enrolled one additional semester past the maximum number of semesters to complete remaining course requirements. The cost of attending the additional semester is the responsibility of the student.

k. An ECEP advisory council shall be established with one representative from each participating LEA and one representative from each college to coordinate activities associated with the ECEP.

l. An ECEP admissions committee shall be established for the purpose of approving and recommending students for admission into career technical or health programs and to address areas of concern for continual participation in ECEP. The committee shall consist of secondary health science and career technical staff, postsecondary health science director and career technical instructors, and the local Career and Technical Administrator and the Chief Instructional Officer over Career Technical programs.

m. Enrollment slots shall be reserved each year in each postsecondary degree/certificate options (career technical and health) for ECEP students as determined by the college.

n. Students may receive college credit by taking the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). Students should consult with their postsecondary academic advisor for information concerning CLEP. The cost of the CLEP is the responsibility of the student.

o. ECEP graduates shall have the opportunity to earn an industry credential or certification when available. Colleges will provide documentation of technical, technological, academic, and employability skills attained by ECEP graduates.

p. Health students shall have the opportunity to apply for the approved program licensure examination.

q. Practical Nursing graduates will be eligible to apply for the Alabama Community College System LPN to RN Mobility Program provided they meet admission criteria.

r. Data, to include student success rates, shall be provided by the local college and the local school system (career and technical education) to the SDE and the DPE. The SDE and DPE will review the ECEP data and guidelines annually for revision.

s. The LEA and the college will ensure compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

IV. CURRICULUM TRACKS (ATTACHMENT A)

Career Technical Programs

a. Career Technical programs shall accommodate students who wish to enroll in courses leading to and/or providing an approved terminal two-year career technical degree and/or certificate. Career Technical programs may include university transfer credits.
b. Students must be on track for obtaining the Alabama High School Diploma with an Advanced Career and Technical Education endorsement and must have passed all sections of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) with the exception of social studies to be eligible to enroll in ECEP. Additionally, students must pass the social studies portion of the AHSGE prior to first semester of the 12th grade (senior year); students not meeting this criterion must withdraw from ECEP.

Health Programs
a. Health programs shall accommodate students who wish to enroll in courses leading to and/or providing an approved health certificate (e.g., Practical Nursing Program) or an approved terminal two-year health degree that may include university transfer credits for programs in the health field.
b. Students must be on track for obtaining the Alabama High School Diploma with an Advanced Career and Technical Education endorsement and must have passed all sections of the AHSGE with the exception of social studies to be eligible to enroll in ECEP. Additionally, students must pass the social studies portion prior to first semester of the 12th grade (senior year); students not meeting this criterion must withdraw from ECEP.

V. ADMISSIONS
General
a. Applications for the ECEP are scored based on criteria established by the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System and the State Superintendent of Education.
b. Applicants having earned more than the minimum high school units in English, mathematics, science, and social studies receive additional points on their ECEP application.
c. ECEP applicants who have earned career and technical Tech Prep credit through articulation and/or college credit through dual enrollment shall receive additional points on their ECEP application.
d. ECEP students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations. The college and the LEA shall make the necessary coordination to ensure that the accommodations are made. LEAs shall provide the college with a copy of the student’s IEP. Colleges shall have a representative present at the IEP meeting when ECEP placement is considered.

Career Technical Program applicants shall:
a. Submit a completed ECEP application and complete COMPASS placement test by May 1 prior to entering fall semester, or March 1 prior to entering summer semester (no spring entry).
b. Complete the 10th grade prior to admission. Students may enter the ECEP only as beginning high school juniors or as beginning high school seniors.
c. Declare a major in postsecondary career technical education program.
d. Earn the required 9th and 10th grade high school units specified for the Advanced Career and Technical Education diploma endorsement option.
e. Have a 2.5 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) in required high school courses.
f. Score 480 or above on the SAT I verbal and 480 or above on the SAT I math; or score 20 or above on the English and math portions of the ACT assessment; or score at or above the level on COMPASS test required for placement into English 101 and Math 112/116.
g. Participate in a student/parent interview conducted by the ECEP Admissions Committee.

Health Program applicants shall:
a. Submit a completed application for the college and the health program by April 15 of the sophomore year.
b. Earn the required 9th and 10th grade high school units specified for the Advanced Career and Technical Education diploma endorsement option.
d. Have a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) in required high school health science courses specified for the Advanced Career and Technical Education diploma endorsement option.
e. Obtain a score of 76 or higher on the COMPASS Reading Examination (or related ACT Reading Score of 17 or higher) and shall be eligible for placement into English 101 and Math 112/116 as determined by college.

f. Participate in a student/parent interview conducted by the Ecep Admissions Committee.
g. Have a 95 percent high school attendance record by the completion of 10th grade year.
h. Complete a physical exam and pass drug tests as required by program policy.

Notes: (1) A student's discipline record will be reviewed and taken into consideration in the admission decision. (2) Meeting minimal requirements does not guarantee acceptance. Student applications for the program are scored based on criteria established by the State Ecep Admissions Committee and the Alabama Community College System.

VI. FINANCIAL

a. The cost of tuition shall be a maximum of $1,000 per student per semester. There is no cost for tuition to the Ecep student.

b. Contingent upon the availability of DPE funding or other sources such as Workforce Development each year, there is no cost for tuition to the Ecep student or the LEA. If funds are not available to provide tuition waivers, the cost of tuition shall be a maximum of $1000 per student per semester and shall be the responsibility of the LEA.

c. Ecep students must maintain full-time postsecondary status per semester.

d. Students needing financial assistance to obtain materials and supplies may receive assistance from the college through mechanisms established for this purpose when available. Textbook purchases are the responsibility of the LEA.

e. Students who graduate from high school while in the Ecep will receive a one-time 50 percent tuition reduction for coursework taken in The Alabama College System. The tuition reduction is applicable to courses taken during the first semester of enrollment following graduation from the Ecep and is available for up to one year after graduation. The tuition reduction is applicable only to courses taken as part of an approved career technical or health program while participating in the Ecep.

f. Students are not eligible to receive federal financial aid while in high school.

g. Federal Perkins IV funds may not be used for tuition or textbook costs.

VII. COUNSELING

a. Potential applicants shall have on file a four-year (high school) plan developed through coordinated efforts between secondary counselors and postsecondary advisors to ensure that articulation is maximized and coursework is appropriate at all levels for entry and successful completion of the program.

b. A student who receives a midterm grade of less than a C from the postsecondary institution will be required to attend tutoring sessions or other special assistance activities until adequate progress is being made in the applicable course(s). The postsecondary institution providing the Ecep course must provide the tutoring sessions or other special assistance activities.
c. ECEP students shall receive detailed academic advisement and counseling at the college to ensure that they are making acceptable progress in the ECEP, with particular emphasis on acceptable progress toward high school graduation.

d. The full array of student services offered by the college, including tutoring, shall be available to all ECEP participants.

VIII. STUDENT PROGRESSION

a. The college and the LEA shall provide an orientation meeting for students and their parents prior to ECEP entry. This orientation is to ensure that all parties understand the ECEP and are aware of the program policies and procedures.

b. ECEP students are counted in attendance reports for both the LEA and colleges. Colleges shall report absences, discipline, and other information as required by the LEA.

c. ECEP students will enter college as full-time students and shall maintain a minimum of 12 postsecondary credit hours per semester/term, at least nine of which must be in career and technical education.

d. Career Technical Program Progression Requirements

1. Students must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in ECEP.

2. A student who receives a midterm grade of less than a C is required to attend tutoring sessions or other special assistance activities arranged by the college until the academic advisor determines adequate progress is being made in the applicable course(s).

3. Students who pass one course with a “D” shall be placed on academic caution for the duration of the program. Those who pass two courses with a “D” shall be placed on academic alert. Those who pass three or more courses with a “D” shall be dismissed from the ECEP. ECEP students on academic caution or alert shall be provided tutoring sessions or other special assistance activities arranged by the college until the academic advisor determines that adequate progress is being made in the applicable course(s).

4. ECEP students who fail a course shall be dismissed from the program unless granted a waiver by the college president and LEA superintendent. Students on academic alert status cannot be granted a waiver. A waiver can be granted only after consultation with the student, parent/guardian, high school counselor, and college academic advisor. Through consultation, all parties shall be informed of and acknowledge that, because of the failing grade, the student may not be eligible to graduate from high school “on time” and may have to take additional classes should the student return to the traditional high school setting. To protect the student’s academic progress toward high school graduation, waivers shall rarely be granted and only in response to extreme circumstances faced by the student.

5. ECEP technical major students who fail more than one course shall be dismissed from the program.

e. Health Program Progression Requirements:

1. Students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale.

2. Students must make a grade of C or better in the postsecondary courses ENG 101 and MTH 112/116.

3. A final grade of 75 or better is required in all nursing courses.

4. Students must maintain ability to meet essential functions throughout the program with or without reasonable accommodations.
5. Students participating in the Practical Nursing program must maintain current CPR certification at the health care provider level.

6. Students not maintaining the requirements listed above must leave the Health Program at the end of the semester and return to a regular high school curriculum.

IX. STUDENT WITHDRAWAL, DISMISSAL

a. A student may withdraw from the ECEP only at the end of a semester.

b. Students who exit the ECEP and return to high school can apply college credits toward high school graduation requirements. (See Attachment B)

C. A student who is expelled from the secondary institution shall be dismissed from the postsecondary program.

X. DUE PROCESS

a. ECEP students shall be provided all due process afforded to any postsecondary student.

b. Students may appeal, in writing to the local superintendent within 15 days, decisions regarding dismissal from the ECEP. The local superintendent may intervene, at his or her discretion, on behalf of the student to the college president.

XI. STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND TRANSPORTATION

a. Students are responsible for providing their own transportation to ECEP course, clinical, and apprenticeship sites unless transportation is provided voluntarily by the LEA.

b. ECEP participants shall function according to the school day as outlined at the college and the LEA. Students must adhere to the attendance policy as prescribed by the college and the LEA.

XII. ELIGIBLE COURSES

a. Completing the ECEP aligns the Alabama High School Diploma with the Advanced Career and Technical Education endorsement and postsecondary certificates and degrees. Postsecondary courses included in career technical degrees and/or certificate programs may be eligible for academic transfer under the STARS program.

b. Courses for ECEP students are the same courses as those for regular college students.

c. ECEP students may enroll in evening courses only under strict advisement and with approval from the college president and the LEA superintendent.

XIII. RECORDS, REPORTING

a. LEAs shall report ECEP students through regular and career and technical education reporting procedures and in accordance with directives from the State Superintendent of Education.

b. Colleges shall report ECEP students through regular and career and technical education reporting procedures and in accordance with directives from the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System.

c. The college shall provide midterm and final grade reports to (in numeric form) high school counselors to record on transcripts.

d. Postsecondary Credits earned through the ECEP shall be transcribed on the college transcript as a letter grade and the high school transcript in numeric form as the academic and program specific career and technical education course. At the secondary level, college credits shall be transcribed as dual enrollment high school/collegiate coursework creditable toward graduation requirements using appropriate subject personnel codes. (Subject personnel codes are available from the CTE Section of the SDE.)
XIV. REINSTATEMENT

a. The student may apply for reinstatement to any Alabama Community College System once he or she has graduated from high school by following this procedure:
   - Apply for admission to the college if not currently enrolled.
   - Submit a letter requesting reinstatement to the career technical or health program in a timely manner so that reinstatement will occur within one year from the date of high school graduation.
   - Demonstrate competency in all previous program courses successfully completed.
   - Adhere to program curriculum or program policies and procedures effective at the point of reinstatement.

b. Reinstatement is not guaranteed.

c. Reinstatement to health programs may be denied due to, but not limited to, any of the following circumstances:
   - Space availability of course in which the student wishes to be reinstated. (Students in regular progression have enrollment priorities for clinical sites).
   - Grade point average is less than 2.0 from courses completed at current institution.
   - Refusal by clinical agencies to accept the student for clinical experiences.
   - Failure to demonstrate continued competency in all previous health program courses successfully completed.
   - Student has been dismissed for disciplinary issues from the program.